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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2006

George Washington Carrier Strike Group To Return From Deployment

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK, Va. – More than 4,500 Sailors from the ships and aircraft squadrons of the George Washington Carrier Strike Group (GW CSG) will return home in the coming days after completing a successful two-month deployment. GW CSG deployed to the Caribbean Sea on April 4 in support of “Partnership of the Americas.”

USS George Washington (CVN 73) and the guided missile destroyer USS Stout (DDG 55) will return to Naval Station Norfolk, Va., Wednesday, **May 24**. The guided missile cruiser USS Monterey (CG 61) will return to the Naval Station on Thursday, **May 25**. The guided missile frigate USS Underwood (FFG 36) will return to her homeport in Mayport, Fla. Tuesday, **May 23**.

Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17 squadrons – Fighter Attack Squadrons (VFA) 131 and 81 will return to Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana; Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 121 and Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 40 Detachment One will return to Naval Station (Chambers Field) Norfolk; and Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HS) Seven and Sea Control Squadron (VS) 22 will return to NAS Jacksonville, Fla.

During “Partnership of the Americas,” GW CSG deployed to the Caribbean Sea in support of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) objectives for enhanced maritime security. The deployment focused on enriching military-to-military relationships with regional partner nations, improving operational readiness, and fostering good will.

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GW CSG operated with forces from Latin America and the Caribbean while focusing on threats such as narco-terrorism and human trafficking. They also worked to improve training levels in a variety of mission areas. The Sailors made many port visits and conducted community relations projects ashore designed to promote friendship with the host nations.

Periodic SOUTHCOM operations and exercises in the Caribbean and South Atlantic underscore U.S. commitment to hemispheric stability and security.

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NOTE: Media partners wishing to cover the homecomings of USS George Washington should contact Second Fleet Public Affairs at 757-443-9850 (x47127) no later than 3p.m. Tuesday, May 23.

Media interested in covering USS Underwood should contact Naval Station Mayport Public Affairs at (904) 270-5226.

Media interested in covering the returning aircraft squadrons to NAS Oceana should contact AIRLANT Public Affairs at 757-444-3373.